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TO ABOLISH OFFICE

Believes Vice President Is Quite Useless

WOULD DO AWAY WITH HIM

Rather Startling Interview Given by President Wheeler of the University of California, Who Explains His Views of Matter in Detail.

CHICAGO, June 14.—"Under the present conditions the office of vice-president has become not only a useless office, but it is a real menace to the system of government in the United States."

Dr. Benjamin Ide Wheeler, president of the University of California, made this remarkable declaration during an interview here at the Auditorium-Annex. The subject came up during a discussion of the scramble that is going on over the vice-presidential nomination on the Republican ticket. Dr. Wheeler's close friendship with President Roosevelt is well known, and in view of this fact, and coming, as it does, on the eve of the Republican national convention, his startling conviction seems of more than passing importance.

"I think this country has outgrown the office of Vice-President," continued Dr. Wheeler when asked for an elaboration of his assertion. "Have you ever stopped to consider that there is only one life between that of the Vice-President and the Chief Executive of this country? The death of a President puts into this position of vast power a man who is likely to be one hardly fitted to inherit so great responsibility."

"I do not mean that one chosen as Vice-President is likely to be an incompetent or wholly unfit by any means, but in the evolution of presidential usage the Vice-Presidency has come to be regarded as a minor office compared with that of President, when in the very nature of things it should be the equal. The Vice-President should be a man with qualifications as great as those of the Chief Executive himself, so that in the event of his being called upon by circumstances to become the head of the nation there would be no weakening of the national executive system."

"This is not always so, however, under the modern political order of things in this country. Look at the impending convention here as an example. Look at the number of names that have been advanced as possible Vice-Presidential candidates. Some have been mentioned with a large degree of prominence and it is possible that some one might be chosen, because of political expediency or other wise, who would not have the high order of ability possessed by the head of the ticket."

"Such a condition should not be, but it is, and because of that I have come to look upon the Vice-Presidency of to-day as fraught with dangerous possibilities. It is because of this that it would seem wise to abolish the office."

"How would you provide for the Presidential succession in that event?" was suggested.

"It is already provided for in the constitution," said Dr. Wheeler. "An amendment fixes definitely the line of succession through the various cabinet of officers. It seems to me that this would be as wise a system in the absence of the vice-presidency as it is with one. The members of the cabinet are invariably strong, able men, carefully chosen by the President and probably far better equipped to assume the place of the executive."

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